

# Rites

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Present turns to past,  
When tenses change with  
The flick of a tongue.  
Passing along a scroll;  
The distant ballads of his life;  
Solemn tunes already sung.  
With no music, no sound  
To account for, mere lyrics  
In thought, romanticised memory.  
Only a visage, asleep at last;  
An ending distorting the movie;  
A picture, eyes closed with placidity.  
Still as a crane, amid four walls  
Of chaos and barn owl wails;  
Unaware of tears deep and shallow.

Powerless in the palms of tradition;  
In the ashes of earth and pails of water;  
Sanctified by words foreign, hands callow.  
On a bed of bamboo and taut rope;  
Softened by a cloth of familiarity;  
Ready for transcendence by fire.  
Present turns to past,  
As he prepares for his final journey.  
Prey to a modern pyre.